

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 091000Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4935
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 5556

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, TW
SUBJECT: PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CALLS FOR AN INDEPENDENT TAIWAN

REF: STATE 209883 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: IN AN AUGUST 18 DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN TAIWAN CALLS ON THE GROC "TO TAKE EFFECTIVE MEASURES WHEREBY TAIWAN MAY BECOME A NEW AND INDEPENDENT COUNTRY." DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE DECLARATION WAS ONLY PARTIALLY INTERDICTED BY GROC AUTHORITIES, AND WIDESPREAD KNOWLEDGE OF ITS CONTENTS HERE AND ABROAD WILL PRESENT THE GROC WITH A SENSITIVE PROBLEM. TO DATE, HOWEVER, THE AUTHORITIES HAVE TEMPERED THEIR CONCERN WITH CAUTION (THERE HAVE BEEN NO ARRESTS OR DETENTIONS), AND WE BELIEVE THIS ATTITUDE WILL PREVAIL UNLESS THE CHURCH OR OTHER INDEPENDENCE SYMPATHIZERS FORCE THE ISSUE.

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2. ACCORDING TO CHURCH SOURCES, THE "DECLARATION" WAS WRITTEN ON INSTRUCTIONS OF A CHURCH MEETING HELD JULY 12 IN TAICHUNG, AND THE FINAL VERSION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE "SPECIALLY DESIGNATED COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON AUGUST 16. THE COMMITTEE DIRECTED THAT THE DECLARATION BE GIVEN BROAD DISTRIBUTION, INCLUDING, IF POSSIBLE,

LOCAL MEDIA.

3. THE DECLARATION SETS ITSELF "IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESENT CRISIS THREATENING THE 17 MILLION PEOPLE OF TAIWAN" AND REQUESTS PRESIDENT CARTER "TO CONTINUE TO UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS WHILE PURSUING THE 'NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNIST CHINA' AND TO INSIST ON GUARANTEEING THE SECURITY, INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN." THE DECLARATION CONCLUDES WITH THE FOLLOWING APPEAL: "AS WE FACE THE POSSIBILITY X AN INVUIION BY COMMUNIST CHINA WE HOLD FIRMLY TO OUR FAITH AND TO THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. WE INSIST THAT THE FUTURE OF TAIWAN SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE 17 MILLION PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE. WE APPEAL TO THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED--ESPECIALLY TO THE PEOPLE AND TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA--AND TO CHRISTIAN CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO TAKE EFFECTIVE STEPS TO SUPPORT OUR CAUSE. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL OF INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM FOR THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN IN THIS CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, WE URGE OUR GOVERNMENT TO FACE REALITY AND TO TAKE EFFECTIVE MEASURES WHEREBY TAIWAN MAY BECOME A NEW AND INDEPENDENT COUNTRY."

4. A COPY OF THE DECLARATION AND A COVERING LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER WERE REPORTEDLY TAKEN OUT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTRY AND MAILED TO THE WHITE HOUSE FROM WITHIN THE U.S. SIMILAR LETTERS WERE SENT TO MANY OTHER CHURCH-RELATED ADDRESSES ABROAD. THE DECLARATION WAS ALSO INCLUDED IN THE AUGUST 21 EDITION OF THE TAIWAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WEEKLY. CHURCH SOURCES MAINTAIN THAT THE GROC WAS ABLE TO INTERCEPT ONLY A PART OF THE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MAILINGS OF THE DECLARATION BECAUSE OF IN-EFFICIENT CENSORSHIP AND BECAUSE THE MATERIAL WAS MAILED FROM VARIOUS LOCAL POST OFFICES.

5. TO DATE, GROC REACTION TO THE DECLARATION DOES NOT SEEM SEVERE. THE REVEREND KAO CHUN-MING, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CHURCH'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND A FEW OTHER CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES WERE ASKED TO MEET WITH THREE KMT OFFICIALS AND AN INTERIOR MINISTRY OFFICIAL ON AUGUST 20. KAO DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS CORDIAL, AND THE OFFICIALS' ATTITUDE AS POLITE. ACCORDING TO KAO, THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES QUESTIONED THE CHURCHMEN ON THEIR MOTIVES FOR PUBLISHING THE DECLARATION, AND LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO THE CHURCHMEN'S EXPLANATION THAT THERE WAS NOTHING SECRET OR SUBVERSIVE ABOUT THE DOCUMENT, WHICH DID NOT CALL FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE CURRENT GROC,

BUT ONLY THE ADOPTION BY THAT GOVERNMENT OF A STATUS INDEPENDENT OF THE MAI AND. KO SAID THAT LOCAPLERGX THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND (MANY OF WHOM REPORTEDLY READ THE DECLARATION FROM THEIR PULPITS) HAVE VARIOUSLY BEEN INTERROGATED AND PUT UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY POLICE, BUT THAT NONE HAS BEEN DETAINED OR ARRESTED. HOWEVER, REVEREND KAO DOES NOT REGARD THE DANGER AS PAST, PARTICULARLY IF FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR THE DECLARATION IS GENERATED.

6. COMMENT: WE FIRST HEARD OF THIS DECLARATION A WEEK AGO WHEN AN EMBOFF VISITED THE EAST COAST. AMERICAN MISSIONARIES IN HUALIEN SAID THEY WERE QUESTIONED BY LOCAL POLICE ABOUT ANY POSSIBLE ROLE THEY MIGHT HAVE PLAYED IN WRITING THE DECLARATION (THEY DENIED ANY ROLE).
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IT ALSO APPEARS THAT THE CHURCH CONSULTED WITH SOME OPPOSITIONIST LEADERS BEFORE ISSUING THE DECLARATION. CERTAINLY THE GROG WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP CAREFUL WATCH ON THE DECLARATION'S RECEPTION, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT MAY BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY POLITICKING BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 19 LOCAL ELECTIONS, BUT WE BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT WILL MOVE CAUTIOUSLY AND SEEK TO AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF HARASSING THE WELL-ROOTED AND OVERWHELMINGLY TAIWANESE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. IN VIEW OF THE CHURCH'S PAST ASSOCIATION WITH CAUSES AT VARIANCE WITH OFFICIAL GROG POLICIES, WE BELIEVE IT IS FULLY AWARE OF THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS DECLARATION, BUT THAT IT HAS DECIDED THAT THE TIME IS OPPORTUNE TO FLOAT ITS IDEA OF INDEPENDENCE. THE CHURCH HAS NOT TAKEN ANY FURTHER ACTION SINCE PUBLISHING THE DECLARATION. WHETHER THEY DECIDE TO DO SO LATER WILL DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON THE AMOUNT OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT THE DECLARATION GENERATES.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

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